

Narrator:

Theresa Daytner is president and CEO of Daytner Construction Group in Maryland. She's a true entrepreneur, having started several businesses ranging from roofing to tax planning. Daytner talked to us about risk, and why conferences like Pathways to Prosperity, a women entrepreneurs' conference in Washington on October 9th, 2009, are so valuable.

Theresa Daytner:

Risk has a lot of different definitions. I think every woman who's come from another country here has taken some amount of risk that their life is going to change dramatically, and are they willing to stand up to either old stereotypes, face their own guilt, or whatever it is. I think risk – it gets some pretty broad definitions. I think it's very personal, because my own perspective is there's always option B, option C, option D.

I look at risk – some people would make that a very large part of their decisionmaking, and I minimize that. And so that's the way that I tend to operate with most of my decisions, is put it in its place. Our reactions to risk have to be appropriate, and if we're constantly responding in a big way to small things, then I think we have to change the way we're prioritizing where we put our energy.

I tend to take the leap first. The good news is I feel I've prepared myself. And I believe that – I've heard a saying that luck is where preparedness meets opportunity. So I've worked a long time to prepare myself, and the opportunities are there. Perhaps I jump in sooner than others would because I don't need to have guarantees.

When I started this business, I convinced my husband to quit his job and come work for me. We have six children, and I was convincing him that we didn't need a paycheck, and he's been tremendous in helping me start it. One of things we sat and talked about was what is our worst-case scenario. If things don't go well, what's our plan. And that was the threshold and the decisionmaker for us. Worst-case scenario at the time, we both agreed we would not risk the roof over our head or the food on the table for our children. And we were both employable, and it was during a good market and we were both getting job offers. If either one of us, not both of us, but if either one of us had taken one of those offers we could have supported the family. That was our worst-case scenario, and we were willing to accept that.

I think obviously there's a lot of maybe co-learning between the mentors and the mentees and everybody in the room; we're all able to share with each other. But I think it's going to be a two-way process. The learning from also the panelists and the envoys is just incredible. Because sometimes there are things you've learned before that we forget, and it's nice to step away from our business and take that time to try and remove the – whatever limiting factors are keeping us from reaching our goals, and remove the emotion and detach yourself somewhat from your business so that you look at it from a totally different perspective. And that's what I think this conference has allowed me the opportunity to do. I'm so

proud of some of these women and where they've come from that it inspires me to try harder.

If I have the opportunity to get to a higher position of influence and power, then I have more ability to create and facilitate and assist with the change that these other women are trying to bring about. I think it's a privilege to be in a position where I may be able to help with that kind of change.

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